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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a case analysis of the role of the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee in the implementation of school desegregation. The analysis provides information about how citizens' monitoring committees (CMCs) work in the desegregated setting, along with the challenges, problems and opportunities they are likely to face. The paper is divided into three parts. The first section is historical and describes the origin of CMCs and the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee. The second section outlines the accomplishments of the Los Angeles CMC and analyzes its contributions to the achievement of desegregation. Finally, the paper reviews the problems faced by the Los Angeles CMC which have limited its effectiveness, and proposes solutions to some of those difficulties. (Author/APM)

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THE LOS ANGELES EXPERIENCE IN MONITORING DESEGREGATION: PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS

Nicelma J. King

September 1980

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PREFACE

This paper is the result of reflection on my two years as a member of the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee. The paper presents a case study of the committee up to Summer, 1980, when I resigned. The case study is drawn largely from my experience and analysis of the events that shaped the committee, so readers should recognize that other interpretations of those events are possible. Many thanks to Mrs. Trudy Hatter and Mrs. Rosemary Nastasia, who are also former committee members, for their comments and suggestions on an earlier draft. Dr. Millicent Cox, a co-worker at Rand who is a current member of the committee, also made numerous helpful suggestions on earlier drafts. These suggestions helped me improve the paper a great deal, but responsibility for any of the remaining shortcomings is solely mine.

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THE LOS ANGELES EXPERIENCE IN MONITORING DESEGREGATION: PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS

Introduction

This paper presents a case analysis of the role of the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee in the implementation of school desegregation. The purpose of this analysis is to provide some clues about how citizens' monitoring committees (CMCs) work in the desegregated setting, along with the challenges, problems and opportunities they are likely to face.

Understanding the role of CMCs is important for two reasons. First, because the courts have begun to appoint CMCs in increasing numbers during the past 5 years. During this time, CMCs have undertaken various oversight activities in the implementation of desegregation. Although CMCs may make an important contribution to the desegregation process, there is little information on how they make this contribution or how it can be enhanced. Second, understanding the role of CMCs is important because CMCs provide an opportunity for increased citizen involvement with the schools. This is particularly critical today, when the increasing complexity of local school operations has made it difficult for citizens to believe that they can participate effectively with schools. This feeling of reduced control is likely to be more important at the time of desegregation, when community ties to the neighborhood school may become more dispersed.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first section will be historical: brief descriptions of the origin of CMCs and the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee. Second will be a description of

the accomplishments of the Los Angeles CMC and an analysis of its contributions to the achievement of desegregation. Finally, the paper will describe problems faced by the Los Angeles CMC which have limited its effectiveness and propose solutions to some of those problems. Although the paper will not attempt to generalize from Los Angeles to other CMCs, the author believes that some parallels and comparisons between the Los Angeles CMC and other CMCs may be drawn.

Historical Perspectives

What are Monitoring Committees?

Citizens' Monitoring Committees (CMCs) are groups of community persons who have agreed to oversee the implementation of a desegregation plan, and to report on the results of that oversight to the court and to the community at large. The committees as they exist today have evolved from the "biracial councils" of the early 1970's. It is estimated that court-appointed CMCs presently exist in 15-20 communities.*

Citizens' Monitoring Committees have arisen in response to the need of the courts to oversee the implementation of school desegregation mandates. This oversight has never been simple, because it is not possible for one person, whether it is the judge in the case or a court-appointed referee, to be present and oversee all of the aspects of the desegregation itself. This limitation in the oversight capability of the courts generally resulted in the court being reliant on the school board to monitor itself and report periodically on its progress in

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* Some earlier CMCs appear no longer to be in operation, but active CMCs currently operate in Denver, Buffalo, Dayton, Cleveland, Boston, Memphis, Detroit, Dallas, Columbus, Ohio, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Springfield, Ill., DeKalb County, Ga. as well as in Los Angeles (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 1977).

desegregating. Nathaniel Jones, General counsel for the NAACP, observed that this results in "the fox being placed in charge of the chicken coop."*

Courts have also had to rely on the plaintiffs for a continued role in oversight of the implementation or modification of desegregation orders. This reliance may have placed an undue burden on the limited resources of a local NAACP, Urban League, or other civil-rights oriented group. In addition, it may have kept community tensions high and sustained the adversary relationship that existed during the trial. Additionally, this method of desegregation oversight provided no outlet for the views of non-aligned community members to be heard by the court. Citizens' Monitoring Committees were created to help courts implement desegregation orders without the partisan image associated with "plaintiffs" or "defendants." It was also hoped that they would provide an opportunity for broad community involvement with the desegregation plan, and that this involvement would increase community acceptance of the order and enhance its peaceful implementation.

Background of the Los Angeles Monitoring Committee

The Los Angeles desegregation case was filed in 1963 by the parents of Mary Ellen Crawford, a black junior high school student and other black parents whose children were attending segregated schools. A 1970 California Superior Court decision found that the Los Angeles Board of Education had the obligation to take all reasonably feasible

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*The point of Mr. Jones' remark was that care had to be taken to prevent CMCs from becoming another kind of "fox." The speech from which this quote was taken was made at a symposium on CMCs sponsored by the Justice Department. The symposium was held in June, 1977.

steps to end segregation in the schools. The California Supreme Court upheld that decision in 1976, and in 1977 court hearings resumed to devise a desegregation plan.

The 1977 court hearings resulted in a mandate to the school district to prepare a desegregation plan for submission to the court. The judge also appointed a special referee to report to the court on the school board's progress toward development of a plan. The fourteenth report issued by this referee called for an appointment of a "Monitoring Commission" which would monitor the school district's performance of its commitments as outlined in the desegregation plan.* The plan developed by the district made specific commitments to the court in seven general areas:

- Desegregation of racially isolated white schools
- Improvement of minority racially isolated schools
- Maintenance of racial balance in currently integrated schools
- Reduction of class size in grades K-3 (Subsequently amended to K-8)
- Reduction of overcrowding
- Development of a district capability for internal monitoring & evaluation
- Maintenance and expansion of the voluntary transfer program

The monitoring committee called for by the referee was envisioned to undertake review and analysis of the districts' success in meeting these

Crawford vs. Los Angeles City Board of Education, Fourteenth Report of Monroe E. Price, Referee; January 24 , 1978.

commitments. In addition, the referee indicated that the committee should monitor:

- o The impact of the district's complicated permit policies on the implementation of desegregation
- o The impact of any district changes in feeder patterns for matriculation from elementary to junior high and from junior high to senior high schools.
- o The establishment of policies and the operation of magnet schools as tools to assist desegregation.
- o The staff development programs and plans; and
- o Any other issue of interest to the court.

At this point, it is important to remember that the Los Angeles Unified School District is the second-largest in the nation, serving some 525,000 students in almost 600 schools. In the 1979-80 school year, the enrollment was about 30% white and 70% combined minority. Given this size and the scope of the issues to be monitored, it might be expected that a large CMC would have been appointed. Instead, the judge appointed 10 non-paid volunteers to the original committee. The committee chair and the referee then devised 8 subcommittee topics. Each committee member, except the chair and the vice-chair, selected a subcommittee topic to work with, and each was expected to recruit a racially representative subcommittee of community members to work on this topic. The judge also ordered a first-year staff budget for the monitoring committee of $180,000, to be paid by the school district. This budget provided a staff of four professional researchers and two clerical support positions.

The Committee began operating in late Spring, 1978. The district was ordered to begin implementing desegregation in September, 1978 under a plan the court called "unacceptable" and "interim." At this stage it was clear that the judge hoped to get the district to expand the desegregation plan by accepting each step the district took toward desegregation. This put him in the position of mediating the case. The remedy phase of the trial continued, even though the district's plan was implemented.

The committee itself was originally composed largely of "community elites" rather than activists or those who had been extensively involved with the schools as parents. Most of the members held professional jobs: two were college professors, one was a management consultant, one a lawyer, one the creative director of a legitimate theatre, one a social science researcher, one a college president, one a manager at a social service agency, one a public school teacher. One was a professional homemaker, and two had extensive involvement in the schools. Racially, the first committee was made up of five whites, two blacks, two Hispanics and one Asian. There were 5 men and 5 women. The chair of the committee did not live in Los Angeles, and his children attended schools outside the district. Six of the 10 had no children attending the L.A. public schools. The committee itself had another problem--because of the extensive professional and volunteer commitments of its members, several members did not attend meetings or participate fully in preparing committee reports. Hochschild and Hadrick (1980) describe one type of CMC that is typically made up of educators, desegregation researchers, and community activists. Their study indicated that this combination typically functions to gather data and channel enough information to the court on the implementation of desegregation so that the

judge can modify court orders as needed. They suggest that this type of committee functions as an extension of the court.

The first chairperson of the committee was selected by the judge, but subsequent chairs have been elected by the committee members and ratified by the judge. Similarly, new committee members have been suggested by the committee itself and subsequently appointed by the judge. The judge has met infrequently with the committee, but has maintained informal communications with the chairperson and committee staff members. Subsequent resignations and additions to the committee have gradually made it more racially representative of the community and have modified its originally elitist complexion. These additions have also provided new members who are more able to invest the large amount of time required than some of the original appointees.

The judge's objectives in appointing this kind of committee in a community as heterogeneous as Los Angeles are not clear. The judge himself indicated that he wanted a committee that could mobilize community resources, such as colleges and universities, to assist in the monitoring process and to help organize the magnet schools. The referee suggested that the judge wanted a prestigious body that would engender the respect of the administration of the school district because of the personal accomplishments and influence of the members. Given the composition of the committee and the details of its charge as outlined in the order and in the referee's fourteenth report described above, it appears that the jduge intended the committee function as an extension of the court. The tensions between these three perceptions of the committee were never completely resolved.

Accomplishments of the Los Angeles Monitoring Committee

Despite the difficulties with membership and the inherent ambiguity of its mission, the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee did establish a procedure for monitoring some of the aspects of desegregation in Los Angeles. The committee recruited and trained about 200 volunteer observers to monitor the opening of school in September 1978. The committee also held public meetings and received comment from the community about various aspects of the school desegregation implementation, school district policies that influenced desegregation, and other issues the community wished a monitoring committee to examine. Some of those community concerns resulted in further examination by the committee or staff; other issues were judged beyond the purview of the committee.

The most visible accomplishments of the committee, however, were its periodic reports to the court. These reports, issued approximately once every four to six weeks, addressed a variety of topics identified in the referee's fourteenth report, as well as other issues of interest to the court and individual committee members. Although the reports were addressed to the court, they were public, and were widely distributed among the parties to the case and interested community members.

The reports had very different purposes. Some reports were primarily descriptive intended to provide the court with a snapshot of some aspect of the district's desegregation program. Other reports were analytical; they proposed recommendations to problems or alternative methods of implementation. The reports covered various topics. Prior

to the opening of school in September 1978, the committee produced a descriptive report on the transportation plans and arrangements for the opening of school. A few weeks after school opened that year, monitors and other volunteers rode buses to determine the length of the rides and the efficiency of the routes. A second transportation report was produced; this one was more analytical, with suggestions to the court on ways the system could be improved. Other reports were issued on topics such as magnet schools, the effect of the district's voluntary desegregation program, the various permit policies and the operation of paired and clustered schools in the mandatory parts of the plan.

The reaction to the reports themselves was mixed. In many instances, the district implemented the suggestions made in the report without waiting for comment from the judge, while in others, they objected strongly to the reports. Because of these mixed reactions, many district employees were somewhat ambivalent about responding to committee requests for information. Was the committee an adversary or an ally? Since the district was still actively participating in the trial, there was a tendency for district staff to see everyone connected with desegregation as either friend or foe. The committee's court-ordered neutrality was never accepted by any of the parties in the case, and as time went on, it became very difficult for some of the committee members to maintain a neutral stance.

One of the reasons it was so important that the committee maintain neutrality is that the remedy phase of the trial continued, even though the district had been ordered to begin desegregation. The plan under which desegregation was started was an interim plan, which

the court allowed to proceed while instructing the district to continue planning for more extensive desegregation. Since the district was not out of the litigation phase, the adversary nature of the ongoing trial made it imperative that the committee remain neutral on the proceedings. This was a very difficult position to maintain, and during the two years before the court's final order, in July 1980, committee members frequently found themselves in potential conflict-of-interest situations.

Although the committee was successful in organizing and producing reports, there were several areas that were not so successful. One of these areas of limited success was in the timeliness of reports for responding to the court's needs. On several occasions, the committee finished a report in time for some deadline set by the judge for consideration in his various orders; on other occasions it did not. The research, analysis, and writing of a report often took longer than expected, and to those who were not actively involved in the production of a report, the cause of the delays was a mystery. In reality, delays are common in analytic efforts of this type where access to information is limited, and interpretations must be re-checked for accuracy and neutrality. In this case, the situation was complicated even further by the fact that committee members had to agree on every word in a report before it was released.

A more important area of low success was the subject matter of the reports themselves. The committee attempted to stay close to the directive of the referee's fourteenth report in deciding which subjects were to be monitored. Although this report provided a good general outline at the time it was written, some of the issues it identified lost

currency or importance during the first year of implementation. On some occasions, a direct request from the court required report topics and schedules to be rearranged, and sometimes the limited availability of committee members caused reports to be tabled indefinitely. This quick-response mode of operation often diverted the committee's attention from long-range problems of importance. During the first two years of operation the committee reported on some aspect of most of the issues outlined in the original charge, except on the progress of the district in reducing overcrowding and the development of a district capability for internal monitoring and evaluation.

One topic of critical importance to desegregation received little attention from the committee--the district's commitment to improve education in the minority racially isolated schools. The issue of improvement in these racially isolated schools is a complex one, and it assumed great importance in Los Angeles because the desegregation plan implemented in September 1978 did not result in a reduction in the number of minority racially isolated schools in the district. Since the goal of desegregation in Los Angeles is to *relieve the harms of racial isolation*,* it was important that those harms be identified for the court, along with the concrete accomplishments the school district had made toward relieving them.

The committee failed to accomplish this task. There always appeared to be some other priority, some more concrete task to be performed with the limited volunteer and staff time available. An important reason for this failure was the fact that its enormity overwhelmed the committee: Of Los Angeles' 653 schools, 382 or 58% were minority racially

*This term was taken from the *Crawford* decision in 1976.

isolated during the 1979-80 school year.* Of those schools, approximately 38% were predominantly black and 60% were predominantly Hispanic. The problem of reporting on minority racially isolated schools was also complex--how could they be improved? What specific promises had the board made that could be monitored? How could the committee measure improvement or demonstrate that no improvement had been made? Additional difficulties were posed by the fact that committee membership was split on whether a separate program for improving racially isolated schools should be part of a *desegregation* plan, since the purpose of desegregation is typically to redistribute students so that racially isolated schools no longer exist.

Under the weight of these problems, the committee put work on the racially isolated schools aside and tackled problems that seemed more tractable. The failure of the committee to devote more of its time and attention to monitoring the effects of the plan on minority racially isolated schools resulted in an unintentional consequence--the monitoring committee monitored the effects of the plan as though the district itself was predominantly white.

This outcome did not help the court or the school district to understand the importance of the minority racially isolated schools. Since the district's plan emphasized desegregating *white* schools, most of the attention of the press and community was targeted to those schools. These schools contained the majority of the white students in the school district, and they had room for minority students because of sharp enrollment declines among whites for the preceding 5 years. As a

*These figures were taken from a report submitted to the court by John Caugney, *Amicus* in the Crawford Case. They are based on the school district's racial and ethnic census of 1979-80.

result of this plan, at the end of the first year of desegregation, the number of white schools had been reduced by minority in-transfers from 119 to 29, but the number of minority racially isolated schools had actually increased from 271 to 272. All of the attention was focused on the 89 newly desegregated schools, most of which were 60% or more white.*

The monitoring committee also focused its attention on those schools, because its task was defined as monitoring the desegregation plan, and these newly integrated schools were the only ones that were actually desegregated by this plan. As a result, all eyes were on the one small area of change rather than on the vast area where nothing seemed changed--the racially isolated schools.

It is not really accurate to say that nothing had changed in these schools. In fact, the minority racially isolated schools had changed in several ways. First, many of them had declined in enrollment. While this fact led to a reduction in overcrowding in some schools, it also served to reduce the number of staff needed at the school. At the secondary school level, this staff reduction led to a reduction in course offerings, particularly among electives and college preparatory subjects. Another effect was that the voluntary aspect of the desegregation plan "skimmed" the most highly motivated minority students out of minority schools. This reduced the demand for college preparatory electives in the minority schools they would have attended, detracted from the push

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* *LAUSD Desegregation Performance: Racially Isolated Schools 1977-1978.* Report of the Monitoring Committee, December 6, 1979 pp. 5-9.

for academic excellence in those schools, and reduced their mean achievement test scores.* These factors reinforced the perception of racially isolated minority schools as inferior, and accelerated the flight of middle-class and highly motivated students to other schools. Although the monitoring committee noted some of these effects, few committee reports concentrated on these factors and the committee failed to devote as much attention to the many the plan left out as it devoted to the few who were included.

This failure is also the key to the success of the committee. All of the committee reports issued during the first two years of its existence concentrated on monitoring the district's accomplishment of tangible commitments. These reports either described the *process* the district used in meeting those commitments or analyzed the *results of actions* taken to meet them. The committee, with its court-appointed neutrality, never commented on whether the commitments were good or bad, or evaluated whether the steps taken to meet them were appropriate or inappropriate. The committee stuck to the facts at hand and left the less tangible aspects of the problems alone. As a result, the reports were seen as clear-cut and generally unbiased, and many of them were useful to the district and the court in instituting policy changes.

In the case of minority racially isolated schools, the district had committed itself to an outcome that seemed unmeasurable to the committee: the improvement of racially isolated schools. Although it might seem reasonable to assume that an improvement in those schools would result in some better educational outcomes for the students in the schools,

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*_Permits with Transportation_, Fourteenth Report of the Monitoring Committee, February 28, 1980 pp. i-iii, 86-89.

the district did not commit itself to that, and the committee did not monitor it. The committee did describe the actions of the district to meet the commitments to racially isolated schools, but they were silent about whether the commitments were vague. In fact, many of the district's commitments to the racially isolated schools *were* vague, and could easily be applied to any school in the district, not just to the racially isolated schools.* In the absence of an ability to make value judgements about the commitments to racially isolated schools or the conditions that made them unequal in the first place, the committee consigned itself to play a peripheral role in the final order. Several committee members believed their hands were tied in this area, but others were bitterly disappointed that such a critical central issue received so little attention.

Problems Faced by the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee

The committee itself faced numerous problems during the first two years of its existence, most importantly in the areas of staffing and membership, conflict of interest, and interpretation of its charge. Each of these problems will be discussed briefly here and potential solutions described.

Staffing and membership problems had a profound effect on the work of the committee. Since the committee defined its responsibilities as being description and analysis of school district actions, the committee

*During the second year of the plan, special programs were instituted to assure that there were enough teachers and textbooks in certain racially isolated schools. Although they were specifically intended to improve the conditions in racially isolated schools, these assurances are expected for all schools whether they are desegregated or not.

members became in effect an ad-hoc research committee. Since only four of the original ten appointees were trained in research methods, the other six members were operating somewhat outside their area of expertise. Although all members were able to contribute significantly to the research mission, the committee lost the benefit of their skills in other areas somewhat. This led to a sense of frustration among some of those members, which may have resulted in reduced participation. This problem could have been alleviated somewhat by the committee taking a longer period of time to define its mission, and defining the mission more broadly than toward research alone.

One of the most important early problems with membership solved itself. The judge appointed several members who were too busy to devote from 5-10 hours a week necessary to make the committee function. The majority of these members resigned as it became obvious that they could not make this commitment, and new appointees were selected who could.

Staff members were difficult to find, particularly those who subscribed to the research mission of the committee, were competent researchers, and were willing to accept a job with low security (the committee operates from year to year). It was also difficult to define the relationship between the committee and staff. In theory, staff members were working for the committee. In reality, the staff reported to the Executive Director of the committee, who was also a staff member selected by the committee. The Executive Director mediated the demands on staff time between various committee members and the judge, who often had emergency requests for monitoring information.

These conflicting demands on staff time often resulted in problems between the committee members and staff. These problems could have been resolved by two things. First, that the committee establish a priority system for production of its reports. This would have made the allocation of staff time to reports much clearer. Second, that the judge's requests be put in writing, and that the Executive Director make an estimate of the staff time required to meet those requests. The committee members could receive copies of the judge's requests and staff burden estimates, discuss them, and adjust their reports priorities and schedules accordingly. This system would have reduced the misunderstandings between committee members and staff members about the work to be done, and resulted in more timely completion of reports.

Conflict of interest is a more difficult problem to solve and no adequate solution was ever reached. The members of the committee were selected because of their accomplishments and visibility in the Los Angeles community. This visibility existed because several of the committee members were active in the schools or in community organizations that were involved with the schools. Some of these organizations were strong supporters of school desegregation. The judge took no clear position about committee members' continued membership in the organizations unless the attorneys for the school board or the dominant anti-desegregation group objected. This position seemed to indicate tacit approval to committee members. In fact, the judge's position was more pragmatic: committee members could be active in any organizations as long as the judge did not get any pressure about it from the school district. This resulted in some committee members being challenged far more often than others, because they received more scrutiny by

the district or by the anti-desegregation group. Not surprisingly, only minority members of the committee were asked to disassociate themselves from various organizations, possibly because they were subject to the greatest scrutiny.

The problem of conflict of interest could have been resolved at any time by the judge taking a firm stand and identifying the types of activities he regarded as conflict-of-interest for committee members. Presumably, the issue of conflict-of-interest will fade as the case moves out of the litigation phase and into implementation of a final court order.

Perhaps the most serious problem faced by the Los Angeles School Monitoring Committee was its interpretation of the monitoring charge. Part of this problem arose from the committee's uncertainty about the judge's objectives for the committee. Although it appeared that the committee should operate primarily as an extension of the court, committee members were expected to increase community participation by recruiting subcommittees of community members. The subcommittees were to be racially representative of the diversity of Los Angeles, and committee members were supposed to meet with those subcommittees regularly. Few of these subcommittees were ever formed, and only one or two took any real role in producing reports. This failure occurred partly because the monitors were already overburdened with activities and partly because there were no clear roles for subcommittee members to play in monitoring activities. Members of the few subcommittees that formed gradually drifted away, ending the hope that monitoring in Los Angeles could serve to increase community participation.

Equally serious was the problem of how to monitor areas where the district had made few commitments, or where those commitments were vague. As mentioned earlier, the committee had a great deal of difficulty in deciding how to monitor the effects of the desegregation plan on the racially isolated schools. Part of this difficulty was because the committee could not decide whether to monitor the *achievement of the commitments* the district had made to the racially isolated schools, or the *value of those commitments* in alleviating the harms of racial isolation.

Monitoring the *achievement of the commitments* would have required a strict interpretation of the monitoring charge. This strategy worked well when commitments were concrete, and based on some observable standard of performance. Examples of this strict interpretation of monitoring are found in committee reports on travel times and magnet school enrollment. Monitoring the *value of those commitments* required a very loose interpretation of the monitoring charge. This strategy would have been necessary when the commitments either were not concrete, or where the school district made implicit assumptions about the value of certain policies. The committee never confronted the question of value of commitments directly, but settled on a third strategy: examining the conflict between district assumptions about certain desegregation policies, and district practices to achieve desegregation. This interpretation of the monitoring charge resulted from a compromise between the monitors who supported a strict interpretation and those who supported a loose interpretation of the charge. Examples of this compromise interpretation are found in committee

reports on the effect of the voluntary, one-way desegregation program on racially isolated schools and the effect on desegregation of the district's complicated permit policies.

The compromise interpretation kept peace among the committee members and kept outside political pressure at a minimum, but it also blunted the effectiveness of the committee in contributing to the final order. The analysis of conflicting assumptions about desegregation was interesting from an implementation standpoint, but was not central to the concerns of the judge, who had to make decisions about desegregation *policy* rather than its *implementation*. Hindsight suggests that the committee should have been willing to question the *value of stated commitments* to desegregate rather than limiting itself to a more scholarly accounting of conflicting assumptions and practices. Certainly, that strategy would have involved substantial risk: the school district leadership viewed the committee as an adversary, and resented having to pay for its operations. If the committee had taken a more controversial stand, its existence might have been challenged more strenuously. A more controversial stand would also have challenged the continuing attention paid to the effects of desegregation on white children, and perhaps caused more of a focus on the effects of segregation on minority children. Another possibility is that the judge might have seen the desegregation policy issues from a clearer viewpoint, and a different type of desegregation order may have resulted.

The judge attempted to mediate the desegregation case. As a result, he developed a desegregation order that was based on his

judgment of the maximum desegregative movement that was feasible for white children rather than the amount that was necessary for relief from racial isolation for a substantial number of minority children.

In the final analysis, even that plan has gone forward reluctantly. The anti-desegregation majority on the school board appear determined to fight any desegregation plan that includes mandatory reassignment. They claim that voluntary, one-way desegregation will provide enough minority students to desegregate every predominantly white school in the district. This claim is probably true, but it misses the mark of the original *Crawford* decision, and it puts the entire burden of desegregation on those desegregation is intended to help--minority children. The real focus of the case should be relief of the harms of racial isolation for *minority* children. Because of its unwillingness to monitor the value of the district's desegregation commitments and their effect on minority racially isolated schools and students, the Los Angeles Monitoring Committee has unwittingly supported this position.

Conclusion

The Los Angeles CMC was required to serve under difficult circumstances. These circumstances included a legal case that had been in the courts for seventeen years, a school district with rapidly declining white enrollment, and a school board that grows more conservative with each election. The circumstances were made even more difficult by the fact that the committee was appointed two years before the court issued a final desegregation order and by the mediating posture assumed by the judge. These last factors meant that the committee was never

very sure of the judge's position on the issues in the case--or how he would view their work. As a result, the committee has often been reluctant to take strong positions on various elements of the desegregation plan.

These difficulties have prevented the CMC from operating as an extension of the court, even though the structure and membership suggest that as the original intent. Although the committee has been helpful to the court, its impact on desegregation has been limited by these circumstances.

As a mechanism for increased community involvement in the schools, the Los Angeles CMC has also been less than successful. Since so much time was devoted to the CMC struggle to define its own identity and mission, little time or energy was left to organize and function with community subcommittees on regular basis. The original subcommittee structure deteriorated as it became clear that there was no mechanism for meaningful community input.

On balance, the Los Angeles CMC has made some modest contributions to the process of desegregation in Los Angeles, but it has not operated as originally intended and it has not lived up to its own expectations. Perhaps those original intentions and expectations were too ambitious, or perhaps they were not delimited by a realistic assessment of the political scene in Los Angeles. In any event, it seems certain that if CMCs are to make meaningful contributions to desegregation, they (1) Must have a firm desegregation order to monitor, (2) Must have their charge and limitations clearly defined by the appointing body; and (3) Must have a sense of how any given situation could be improved,

given some policy change or modification of the court order. These three elements have been missing from the first two years of desegregation monitoring in Los Angeles.

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